A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION

Thursday, October 12. 1710.

I Have touch'd a little at the Diſorders of our Elections; and indeed it is but a little that I can ſay to them; what Pen can deſcribe the Exceſſes and Exorbitances, that theſe Things are come to; no Man would believe it poſſible, that in a well Govern'd Nation, and a Chriſtian People, ſuch Extravagant Things could be practis'd, *much leſs practis'd with Impunity.*

I have touch'd a little, at the Drunkenneſs and Debaucheries of the Elections; I have a little pleaded with you, about the Inconſiſtency and Ridiculous Madneſs of this practice, *that it is againſt common Senſe*, to Debauch Men's Judgments, that they ſhould be enabl'd to know how to Chooſe, to vitiate their *Underſtandings*, that they may may *Underſtand*, and make them *blind*, that they may *ſee*.

I have hinted what I believe no Man will deny, *viz.* that this Practice is a profeſs'd Acknowledgement of ſome Deluſion, ſecretly contriv'd to be put upon the Electors, ſome Snare laid for them, that if their Eyes were open, they would not fall into; ſomething to be impos'd upon them, that when they are themſelves, will not go down with them; if the Caſe was what would bear the Light, if the Nature of the Thing, and the Merit of

of the Perſon, would enforce the Election, they would certainly leave the Perſons Chooſing entirely free—— And help them to all the Light poſſible, that they might Judge for themſelves, and the clearer and eaſier, freer and more unconcern'd they are, *the better.*

But if the Judgment of the Freeholder muſt be byaſs'd, if his Head muſt be muddled with Wine, his Eyes blinded with a Bribe, or his Senſes ſtupify'd with Liquor; *to me* there can be no greater demonſtration of the Thing, that there is certainly ſomething to be put upon him, *that when his Head is clear*, he will not take; ſomething for him to do, that in his Senſes he can never be perſuaded to; it can be nothing elſe; Wine in this Caſe, can be of no other uſe, but to bring the Poor People into a Condition, that they may not know what they do, and then they are fit to do what they know nothing of, and this is to do what the Party wants of them.

It was but laſt Week I found two Men Wrangling about this very Thing; one had been Voting contrary to his Judgment, and former Practice, and the other was upbraiding him with it—— *Why Jack*, ſays his Comrade, *what ails you now? What, have you Poll'd againſt Sir* William? Why *you always us'd to ſay you would Vote for him againſt all the World*, What's the matter now?— *Why it is very true*, Tom, ſays he, *I did*, and *I am vex'd heartily at it, I had rather have given any Money*; Why, *how come you to be ſo mad*, Says Tom? *Nay*, ſays Jack, *you may be ſure I did not know what I did*—— What, ſays Tom, *I warrant they got you in for it, and ſo carried you up to Poll in a Heat*—— *Why Tom*, ſays Jack, *to tell you the Truth, the Steward and two or three more, got me in, and follow'd me ſo hard with the Glaſs, that I got Drunk, and they took me at the Advantage, and carry'd me away, and made me promiſe them, but I am ready to Hang my ſelf now it's done, I'll NEVER Vote for him again*—Well, ſays Tom, *and who went to Vote with you? Why*, ſays Jack, *there was ſuch* a one, *and ſuch* a one, *and ſuch* a one, and ſo reckons up ten or a dozen —— *And were they all in your Caſe*, ſay Tom? *Ay*, ſays Jack, *every one of them, and they are all ſo Mad at it, they ſwear, if they meet* Robert *the Steward handſomly, they'll throw him into the Horſe-Pond, for he did it all.*

This is the very Caſe, I might ſay, almoſt all over *England* — And in my Opinion, there is but very little Myſtery in it, any Body may ſee it; *The Caſe is plain*, Men are made Drunk, that they may not know what they do—— *They ſay*, it was the Deſign heretofore of the Papiſts, to Debauch the Morals of the Nation, that ſo caſting off a Senſe of any Religion, they might the ſooner embrace the *Popiſh*—— Here they Debauch the Senſes of the People, that having no Underſtanding which Side to Chooſe, they may Chooſe theirs— I think it can remain no longer a Queſtion, let it be on which Side it will, he that aims at Debauching the Electors, has the worſt ſide in the Election; he that aims at *blinding them*, has ſomething in his Cauſe he would not have them ſee; and would the Freeholders but conſider this, would they but think a little, they would take it for the moſt inſolent Affront in the World, to have it offer'd to them.

A Freeholder ſhould ask a Candidate, or the Agents of a Candidate, Sir, What do you mean? What do you take me to be? Do I ſee too plain for you? Have you ſomething you would conceal in the Choice, that you dare not truſt me with my Senſes in Chooſing?— It is ſuch a putting upon the Freeholders, that would they but open their Eyes, they would reject the Bribes, and contemn with all poſſible Contempt, the leaſt offer that ſhould look like a Debauch, as what is firſt ſuppoſing them to be Sots, and then making them Fools.

And there indeed is the Thing to be lamented; 'tis becauſe our Freeholders are to be Debauch'd, that the Attempt is made to Debauch them; were not the People to be Tempted, were not the bait agreeable, and the General Temper of the People apparently ready to take the Vile Country-betraying, Religion-Selling Poiſon, the Offer would not be thus made, nor the Evil

vil run so high——— Would but the People once come to reject with Scorn, the Treats, the Bribes, and the Corruptions of the Candidates, the Elections would soon return to their Native course, and Merit alone would be the Thing, to recommend a Man to the Choice of his Country.

But till it comes to this, *and God knows when that shall be*——— We can never expect but the Choice will be in a Proportion to the Means that procur'd it, and the Persons Chosen, be as Mercenary as the People Choosing them.

How should Vicious Practices assist in the Choice of Men that abhor Vice? Bribery and Corruptions Vote for Men *hating Covetousness?* How should Men of Virtue come into the House, by the means of a general Defection to Vice——— While the Methods of Electing are directed from Hell, the Persons Chosen will be of Kin to that Place.

We have innumerable Precedents for the Thing, and abundance for the Practice; Devils Choose Devils, and Swine will send Swine to the House; Wo to that Parliament, whose Members are Chosen by a Race of Drunkards.

When will this Nation begin to look about her? When shall we Judge for ourselves? Take a Riotous Clergy, a Debauch'd Gentry, and a Drunken People—Is it possible these three sorts should join together, to send Men of Temper, Vertue, and Honour to Parliament?——How should we gather Grapes of these Thorns, or Figs of these Thistles? No *clean thing* can be brought *out of this uncleans.* NO NOT ONE.

Let these Gentlemen consider this, who were for the Dissolution of the last Parliament; can Bribery, Corruption, Intemperance, and Scandalous Drunkenness mend your Work in the Election?——— It cannot be said the Queen desires to have a Vicious Debauch'd House——— Nor I hope, did these Gentlemen, we call the New Ministry, propose to answer their Ends by such an Election; it cannot consist with their very Offices, in which a steady carrying on the Nation's Business, seems to be the Work in Hand——— A Parliament chosen by Debauchery, Excess and Extravagance, cannot consist with their Expectation——Nor with the Support of their Interest——Like will produce like: Bad Causes will produce bad Effects, and Miserable Elections must produce a Miserable Parliament.

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